



Improving Broadband in Ansty: the next steps....

Dear Ansty Villagers,

I thought I should give you an update following the Ansty Broadband Feedback Survey and subsequent contact with Wessex Internet and Openreach. I have included some details on how things have developed over recent weeks, which I think helps to explain the context of our current position.

Feedback Survey

There was a good level of response to the feedback survey with 19 Ansty households interested in Fibre To The Premises (FTTP). Wessex wanted addresses on or near the A30 included in the package they would offer, but the survey showed these properties were satisfied with their broadband service, either from a Wessex satellite system or through Openreach. The current demand for FTTP is contained within High Street and the middle section of Ansty Coombe. Based upon the survey responses a list of households interested in upgrading to FTTP was sent to Wessex and Openreach.

Wessex Internet

Wessex work on the basis of using the Government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher scheme (RGCV). Each household that signs up with them for FTTP can claim a voucher worth £1,500 and a business £3,500. Each household/business also has to commit to a Wessex broadband package. Prior to the Feedback Survey being issued, a list of 49 properties had been received from Wessex advising that they would need sufficient uptake from these properties to raise £35k from the voucher scheme or donations in order for them to implement the scheme in this area. At that time their list of addresses excluded Ansty Coombe, as they said they were eligible for state aid and not the government voucher scheme. This has been overturned and Ansty Coombe is now in the voucher scheme. So after the Feedback survey, we dropped the A30 addresses where no broadband upgrade was needed and added Ansty Coombe. This gave us fewer addresses and a much more compact set of properties. However Wessex still maintain they still need £35k to proceed. If everyone that expressed interest signed up, including the possibility of one business we would raise about £30k through the voucher scheme. It is unlikely that everyone would sign up, but it looks as though we are in the zone of the possible.

Openreach

During the time of the Feedback Questionnaire I did receive a proposal from Openreach, I think in response to my complaining to them, to install broadband to ten properties in High Street. This was not pursued as it catered for less than half the Ansty properties wanting FTTP. I mention this because the cost was about £6k and well within the voucher capability. This was through the Openreach Community Partnership scheme which also uses the Government RGCV (voucher) scheme.

Following the Feedback Survey I sent to Openreach the list of 19 properties in High Street and Ansty Coombe interested in going to FTTP. They have responded with a list of 69 properties and a price before voucher deductions of £65k. On analysis 25 are in Tisbury and it includes also seven properties in Ansty that already have FTTP available to them, courtesy of Openreach. I have gone back to them asking for an offer that just includes the Ansty properties.

Points to note

- Wessex install the infrastructure and also provide the broadband service. So with Wessex you would not have a choice of provider like you do with Openreach, where you can have your service from BT, Plusnet, EE, Vodafone etc. Once you commit to Wessex you can only receive their broadband through their cabling.
- On the plus side with Wessex, every household/business signs up directly with Wessex at the outset. Openreach will only contract with a single entity, so we have to collectively form an entity to contract with Openreach. This is just for the cabling installation. You would have your own contract with the provider you choose to supply the broadband down the Openreach installation.

Next Steps

- I will pursue Openreach to see if we can get a more sensible proposal from them, which targets the properties in Ansty interested in FTTP.
- Everyone who has expressed interest in FTTP should register their interest on the Wessex Internet website (wessexinternet.com) if you have not done so already. You are registering interest and not making a commitment for their installation/service. I understand there are just two or three registrations at the moment from Ansty, so please add yourselves. If we can show interest from 20 households we will move up their list of interested parties and this will put us in a better position to have a more serious conversation with them.
- Evaluate the best proposals we can get and see if there is enough support to proceed

I am not specifically expecting comments on progress made so far - but please feel free to respond with thoughts/advice. I have no expertise in telecoms so this will be a collaborative effort and if we get to the stage of looking to proceed I suggest we head it up with a small group from those wanting to take part.

Best wishes

Tim Martin